

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 1, 5, 7-14 and 17-19 are pending in this application. By this amendment, Claims 1, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, and 17-19 have been amended; and Claims 6 and 16 have been canceled. The amendments to Claims 1 and 13 are supported, by way of non-limiting example, in now canceled Claims 6 and 16, respectively. The other amendments to the claims are made to place them in a preferred form for United States practice. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that no new matter has been added.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 13-19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Tami et al. (U.S. 2004/0059634 A1, hereinafter “Tami”); Claims 1, 5-9, 11 and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tami in view of Can et al. (U.S. 2002/0038267 A1, hereinafter “Can”); and Claim 10 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tami in view of Can as applied to Claims 1, 4 and 8 above, and further in view of Kobayashi et al. (U.S. 2004/0083260 A1, hereinafter “Kobayashi”).

Claim 1 recites, in part:

the image forming apparatus further comprising:

a supply remaining amount sending part for sending, to the office supply information server, data of a remaining amount of a consumable item that is consumed by the image forming apparatus in image forming processing,

wherein the office supply information server sends a warning relating to the remaining amount to the image forming apparatus when the received remaining amount is smaller than a predetermined amount, and

the image forming apparatus orders the consumable item from the office supply information server by using the client information sending part based on information input from the touch panel.

Claim 13 recites, in part:

wherein,

the office supply information server receives data of a remaining amount of a consumable item that is consumed in the image forming apparatus in image forming processing, and

the office supply information server sends a warning relating to the remaining amount to the image forming apparatus when the received remaining amount is smaller than a predetermined amount,

the office supply information server sends a supply replenishment prompt signal for prompting a user of the image forming apparatus to replenish the consumable item to the image forming apparatus when the remaining amount is smaller than a predetermined amount for the consumable item.

It is respectfully submitted that the above features are neither disclosed by nor rendered obvious by Tami, Can, Kobayashi or any conceivable combination thereof.

Tami describes, “hand held units are interfaced with an in-store Point Of Sale (POS) system in the inventory management system discussed earlier to provide and display current inventory and pricing data on each stock item bar code that it reads.”¹ In Tami “the handheld units 58 can be programmed to query the ISP 14 to provide computer assisted ordering information for the stock item read.”² In Tami “a database of in-store-inventory can be analyzed for generating computer assisted re-stocking orders, or be analyzed for customer purchasing preferences in a given geographical location.”³

Tami describes, “the POS system 108 is integrated with the inventory management system 114, to capture and track all inventory received and shipments against invoice, as well as quantity ordered vs. quantity received.”⁴ Thus, in Tami, “the method of the present invention allows for automatic stock replenishment based on POS scan data with re-order

¹ Paragraph [0054].

² Paragraph [0058].

³ Paragraph [0061].

⁴ Paragraph [0077].

points configurable in the inventory file.” As a result, Tami provides “fully automatic generation of orders to replenish merchandise, based on POS scan data.”⁵

Tami describes an inventory management system for tracking/managing inventory information and supporting automatic stock replenishment. Tami only describes a general inventory management system. Tami does not suggest at least the claimed image forming apparatus that sends, to the office supply information server, data of a remaining amount of a consumable item (such as toner) that is consumed by the image forming apparatus in image forming processing, and that orders the consumable item based on warning from the office supply information server.

That is, in Tami, point-of-sale scan data is required to generate orders to replenish merchandise. There is no description in Tami of image forming apparatus that sends, to the office supply information server, data of a remaining amount of a consumable item as described above. Therefore, Tami fails to describe or render obvious the features of Claims 1 and 13 quoted above.

Neither Can nor Kobayashi correct the deficiencies of Tami described above, because neither reference describes the features of Claims 1 and 13 quoted above.

It is respectfully submitted that dependent Claims 5, 11-12, 14 and 17-19 are patentable at least for the reasons argued above with regard to the claims from which they depend.

Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejections of Claims 1, 5-14 and 16-19 be reconsidered and withdrawn, and that Claims 1, 5, 7-14 and 17-19 be found allowable.

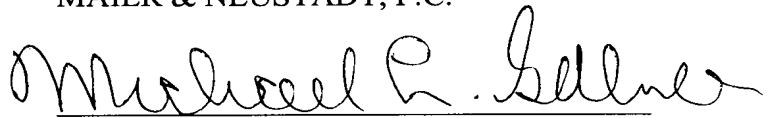
Consequently, for the reasons discussed in detail above no further issues are believed to be outstanding in the present application and the present application is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. Therefore, a Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

⁵ Paragraph [0079].

Should the Examiner deem that any further action is necessary to place this application in even better form for allowance, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned representative at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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